



## OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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# THINK FOOD

## School Nutrition Programs

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#### COMMODITIES - GREAT TASTE AND HEALTHY TOO

USDA commodities are healthy options and American-grown foods. Today, because of some aggressive improvements USDA has made, schools participating in the NSLP have the widest choice of healthy commodity foods to date.



Many commodity foods can be menued to support the Dietary Guidelines and MyPyramid Food Guidance System. They taste great and are low in fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and sodium. Whole grain choices are included too.



For a full list of USDA's available commodity foods to schools visit [www.commodityfoods.usda.gov](http://www.commodityfoods.usda.gov). Click on *FNS Schools/Child Nutrition Commodity Programs* link and then *Foods Available*.



#### TOP 10 REASONS WHY YOUR SCHOOL SHOULD OFFER A BREAKFAST PROGRAM

10. It's the most important meal of the day – We've all heard this one, when we eat something in the morning, we're telling our bodies that it's time to get moving for the day.
9. Long bus rides – Even if the kids ate breakfast at home, they're probably hungry. 
8. Morning basketball (wrestling, track, band, etc.) practice – It's hard to fit all extracurricular activities into a school day. Kids are busy. Make sure your students are able to fuel up with something nutritious.
7. Some kids just aren't hungry as soon as they get up – Some kids' (and adults') stomachs aren't ready for food until later in the day. 
6. This is a flexible program and it works around your school schedule –



Breakfast can be served in the classroom, in the hallway, after first period or during morning announcements. You can even start a program after the beginning of the school year, or try it for a few months to see how it goes.

5. Have a breakfast break instead of a milk break - Schools do not receive any USDA reimbursement for a milk break. Students eligible for free and reduced-price meals will receive the same lunch benefits and the school will receive reimbursement for all of the meals served.



4. USDA Reimbursement - If your school serves a large percentage of lunches to children eligible for free and reduced-priced meals, you may be able to get an additional \$.26 for each free and reduced-price breakfast served.

3. The menus are easy - Cereal, toast, juice and toppings for the toast, peanut butter, jelly, cinnamon sugar, and honey are a few examples.



2. School Wellness Policies - A school breakfast program promotes and supports a healthy lifestyle. The school environment provides healthy choices for students.

1. **Hungry kids can't learn!**

To find out how your school can start a school breakfast program contact School Nutrition Programs at (406) 444-2501.



## SUMMER STORAGE REMINDER

Be sure to include frozen and perishable foods on your menus before the end of the school year to decrease the chance of loss during the summer.

All foods remaining in dry storage over the summer should be stored in clean, well ventilated areas. They should be protected from theft, spoilage and rodent/insect infestation. Optimum dry storage temperatures are 70 degrees or below.



In both dry, refrigerator and freezer storage, foods must be kept off of the floor. Allow four inches of space between the walls and cases/containers of foods. This will allow for proper air circulation. In some cases, it may be necessary to use fans to aid circulation.

Food requiring refrigeration and freezing should be stored in clean areas where temperatures are monitored daily. A Food Storage Temperature Chart can be found at [www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/foodDistNEW.html](http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/foodDistNEW.html).

Refrigeration storage should run approximately 35 degrees and freezer storage 0 degrees or below. Check thermometers. Do not



assume refrigeration is cooling correctly just because the motor is running.

Freezer outages and insect infestation have resulted in large losses in many school districts in past years. In many instances, overstocking and failure to check cold storage temperatures daily during the summer months caused the losses.

#### **STATEMENT FROM SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION ON FOOD SAFETY OF USDA COMMODITY BEEF**

January 30, 2008 -- The School Nutrition Association (SNA) asserts that all foods provided to students through the National School Lunch Program have been tested and inspected by USDA prior to school use. School nutrition professionals must rely on the USDA to ensure that food provided through the USDA Food Distribution Program (Commodity Program) is safe. SNA will be contacting USDA to address serious concerns raised over the alleged violations of food safety policy and practice identified by the Humane Society.....

Food products purchased by school nutrition professionals must be produced in compliance with appropriate federal and state food-safety laws and regulations. All

vendors providing products for child nutrition programs are required to have satisfactory performance records. Any possible breach of safety and security by individuals' or companies' indicates the continued need for absolute diligence on all testing and inspections.

In school kitchens nationwide, school nutrition professionals maintain a superior food safety record through the use of trained staff and food safety procedures including HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) systems - a comprehensive approach to food safety that follows the flow of food through a foodservice operation to eliminate or reduce the risk of food borne hazards. Among these procedures are examinations of foods as they are received by the kitchen as well as use of proper cooking and holding temperatures to ensure food is safe. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Government Accountability Office (GAO) data on school-based food borne illness outbreaks indicate school nutrition programs across the country maintain exceptional food safety records.

#### **DID YOU KNOW...**

...Commodities account for 15-20 percent of school nutrition program food purchases. That makes commodities a small, but important component of school meals. The remaining 80-85 percent of food is purchased by local schools or agencies from commercial vendors.